

REMARKS

Claims 7-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hosoi (U.S. Patent No. 5,168,429) in view of Ishida (U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,565).

Applicant maintains that the combination of Hosoi and Ishida does not properly teach or suggest the features of claim 7 for the reasons set forth in the October 16, 2006 Amendment. Nevertheless, claims 13, 15 and 16 also contain allowable subject matter (see section 3 of the present Office Action). Thus, to expedite prosecution, the application is placed in condition for allowance by amending claim 7 to include the allowable features of claim 13. The rejection of claims 7 is, therefore, deemed moot. The rejection of claims 8-12 is likewise deemed moot at least by virtue of claims 8-12 respectively depending from claim 7.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Patent Application No. 10/776,183

Q79872

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

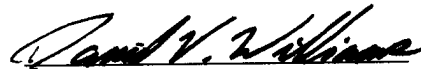
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